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Claims

1. (Currently Amended) An inflatable blanket for covering and bathing a patient in a thermally-controlled inflating medium comprising:

an inflatable apparatus having (a) a flexible base sheet with a plurality of exhaust ports, (b) a flexible overlaying sheet attached to the base sheet to define at least one inflatable chamber between the base sheet and the overlaying sheet, (c) an inlet port to receive the thermally-controlled inflating medium that can enter the at least one inflatable chamber, and (d) a periphery zone that is uninflatable and not surrounded by the inflatable chamber;

an elongated tie strap having (a) an attachment portion that is ~~fixedly~~ permanently attached to a non-periphery surface of the inflatable apparatus, and (b) a remaining portion that is removably attached to the non-periphery surface of the inflatable apparatus and extends from the attachment portion a sufficient distance to be able to secure the inflatable blanket in place.

2. (Original) The inflatable blanket of claim 1 wherein the remaining portion is tacked to the non-periphery surface of the inflatable blanket.

3. (Original) The inflatable blanket of claim 1 wherein the remaining portion extends from one side of the attachment portion.

4. (Original) The inflatable blanket of claim 1 wherein the remaining portion extends from two distinct sides of the attachment portion.

5. (Original) The inflatable blanket of claim 1 wherein the blanket has a second elongated tie strap having (a) a second attachment portion that is fixedly attached to the non-periphery surface of the inflatable blanket, and (b) a second remaining portion that is removably attached to the non-periphery surface of the inflatable blanket.

6. (Currently Amended) The inflatable blanket of claim 1 wherein the tie strap is a ~~pull-string~~ pull-strap device.

7. (Original) The inflatable blanket of claim 1 wherein the periphery has at least one slit to receive at least a portion of the remaining portion of the tie strap.

8. (Original) The inflatable blanket of claim 1 wherein the non-periphery surface is selected from the group consisting of the flexible base sheet with a plurality of

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exhaust ports, the flexible overlaying sheet, and any welded portion that is surrounded by the inflatable chamber.

9. (Currently Amended) An inflatable blanket for covering and bathing a patient in a thermally-controlled inflating medium comprising:

an inflatable apparatus having (a) a flexible base sheet with a plurality of exhaust ports, (b) a flexible overlaying sheet attached to the base sheet to define at least one inflatable chamber between the base sheet and the overlaying sheet, (c) an inlet port to receive the thermally-controlled inflating medium that can enter the at least one inflatable chamber, and (d) a periphery zone that is uninflatable and not surrounded by the inflatable chamber;

an elongated tie strap (A) having (a) an attachment portion that is removably attachable to a non-periphery surface of the inflatable apparatus, and (b) a remaining portion that extends from the attachment portion a sufficient distance to be able to secure the inflatable blanket in place, and (B) prior to being attached for the first time to the non-periphery surface the tie strap is extensively perforated to and extended from the periphery;

wherein the remaining portion extends from two distinct sides of the attachment portion.

10. (Canceled) ~~The inflatable blanket of claim 9 wherein the remaining portion extends from two distinct sides of the attachment portion.~~

11. (Original) The inflatable blanket of claim 9 wherein the blanket has a second elongated tie strap having (a) a second attachment portion that is fixedly attached to the non-periphery surface of the inflatable blanket, and (b) a second remaining portion that is removably attached to the non-periphery surface of the inflatable blanket.

12. (Currently Amended) The inflatable blanket of claim 9 wherein the tie strap is a pull-string pull-strap device.

13. (Currently Amended) An inflatable blanket for covering and bathing a patient in a thermally-controlled inflating medium comprising:

an inflatable apparatus having (a) a flexible base sheet with a plurality of exhaust ports, (b) a flexible overlaying sheet attached to the base sheet to define at least one inflatable chamber between the base sheet and the overlaying sheet, (c) an inlet port to

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receive the thermally-controlled inflating medium that can enter the at least one inflatable chamber, and (d) a periphery zone that is uninflatable and not surrounded by the inflatable chamber;

an elongated tie strap (A) having (a) an attachment portion that is removably attachable to a non-periphery surface of the inflatable apparatus, and (b) a remaining portion that extends from the attachment portion a sufficient distance to be able to secure the inflatable blanket in place, and (B) prior to being attached for the first time to the non-periphery surface the tie strap is extensively perforated to and extended from the periphery; The inflatable blanket of claim 9

wherein the periphery has at least one slit to receive at least a portion of the remaining portion of the tie strap.

14. (Original) The inflatable blanket of claim 9 wherein the non-periphery surface is selected from the group consisting of the flexible base sheet with a plurality of exhaust ports, the flexible overlaying sheet, and any welded portion that is entirely surrounded by the inflatable chamber.

15. (Original) An inflatable blanket for covering and bathing a patient in a thermally-controlled inflating medium comprising:

an inflatable apparatus having (a) a flexible base sheet with a plurality of exhaust ports, (b) a flexible overlaying sheet attached to the base sheet to define at least one inflatable chamber between the base sheet and the overlaying sheet, (c) an inlet port to receive the thermally-controlled inflating medium that can enter the at least one inflatable chamber, (d) a periphery that is uninflatable and not entirely surrounded by the inflatable chamber, and (e) at least two spot welds and each spot weld is capable of having an aperture therein;

an elongated tie strap having two terminal ends and at each terminal end is a turnable locking mechanism, each turnable locking mechanism is capable of forming the aperture or entering the aperture of one spot weld and being positioned to removably secure the tie strap to the blanket.

16. (Original) A method of securing into position an inflatable blanket for covering and bathing a patient in a thermally-controlled inflating medium comprising:

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using an inflatable apparatus having (a) a flexible base sheet with a plurality of exhaust ports, (b) a flexible overlaying sheet attached to the base sheet to define at least one inflatable chamber between the base sheet and the overlaying sheet, (c) an inlet port to receive the thermally-controlled inflating medium that can enter the at least one inflatable chamber, (d) a periphery that is uninflatable and not surrounded by the inflatable chamber, and (e) at least two spot welds and each spot weld is capable of having an aperture therein;

positioning a tie strap on a non-periphery surface of the inflatable blanket wherein the tie strap is selected from the group consisting of:

- I. an elongated tie strap having (a) an attachment portion that is fixedly attached to the non-periphery surface of the inflatable blanket, and (b) a remaining portion that is removably attached to the non-periphery surface of the inflatable blanket and extends from the attachment portion a sufficient distance to be able secure the inflatable blanket in place,
- II. an elongated tie strap (A) having (a) an attachment portion that is removably attachable to the non-periphery surface of the inflatable blanket, and (b) a remaining portion that extends from the attachment portion a sufficient distance to be able secure the inflatable blanket in place, and (B) prior to being attached for the first time to the non-periphery surface the tie strap is extensively perforated to and extended from the periphery,
- III. an elongated tie strap having two terminal ends and at each terminal end is a turnable locking mechanism, each turnable locking mechanism is capable of forming the aperture or entering the aperture of one spot weld and being positioned to removably secure the tie strap to the blanket, and
- IV. combinations thereof;

securing the inflatable blanket in place through the tie straps.

17. (Original) The inflatable blanket of claim 16 wherein the periphery has at least one slit to receive at least a portion of the remaining portion of the tie strap.
18. (Original) The inflatable blanket of claim 16 wherein the non-periphery surface is selected from the group consisting of the flexible base sheet with a plurality of

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exhaust ports, the flexible overlaying sheet, and any welded portion that is surrounded by the inflatable chamber.

19. (Currently Amended) A method of securing into position an inflatable blanket for covering and bathing a patient in a thermally-controlled inflating medium comprising:

using an inflatable apparatus having (a) a flexible base sheet with a plurality of exhaust ports, (b) a flexible overlaying sheet attached to the base sheet to define at least one inflatable chamber between the base sheet and the overlaying sheet, (c) an inlet port to receive the thermally-controlled inflating medium that can enter the at least one inflatable chamber, and (d) a periphery that is uninflatable and not encircled by the inflatable chamber;

positioning a tie strap on a non-periphery surface of the inflatable blanket wherein the tie strap is selected from the group consisting of:

- I. an elongated tie strap having (a) an attachment portion that is fixedly attached to the non-periphery surface of the inflatable blanket, and (b) a remaining portion that is removably attached to the non-periphery surface of the inflatable blanket and extends from the attachment portion a sufficient distance to be able secure the inflatable blanket in place,
- II. an elongated tie strap (A) having (a) an attachment portion that is removably attachable to the non-periphery surface of the inflatable blanket, and (b) a remaining portion that extends from the attachment portion a sufficient distance to be able secure the inflatable blanket in place, and (B) prior to being attached for the first time to the non-periphery surface the tie strap is extensively perforated to and extended from the periphery, and

III. combinations thereof

securing the inflatable blanket in place through the tie straps;

wherein the periphery has at least one slit to receive at least a portion of the remaining portion of the tie strap.

20. (Canceled) ~~The inflatable blanket of claim 19 wherein the periphery has at least one slit to receive at least a portion of the remaining portion of the tie strap.~~

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21. (Original) The inflatable blanket of claim 19 wherein the non-periphery surface is selected from the group consisting of the flexible base sheet with a plurality of exhaust ports, the flexible overlaying sheet, and any welded portion that is entirely surrounded by the inflatable chamber.